2; Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1989 AV7 Burusho AV7

miles daily to Báltít, as Yaman and a couple of our other young friends did, and attend the Government-supported school with the sons and grandsons of the Mir and the Wazir. Promising children of the more well-to-do can attend a more advanced school at Gilgit, and the really studious may even make their way down to Srinagar.

Ninety-nine per cent of the population, however, happily still remain illiterate, and have not fallen victims to compulsory education. When the people would question me about conditions in England, they were horrified to learn of such things as rates and income-tax, but even more aghast at the tyranny that compels both boys and girls to spend the years from five to fourteen at school. "But that's the time when they ought to be *learning things*," they said.

When my pleasant evening "By the Lamp" was ended and I had said good-bye, cautiously descended the ladder and mounted my waiting horse, I was shocked to see my host accompanying us carrying a tray of food. I had expressly stipulated that I would only accept his kind invitation on condition of not being laden with food gifts to take home. To my protests Kalbi said: "Yes, yes, Mother dear, it's all right. I'm not forgetting. I'm only taking up his supper to the sweeper."

With honourable simplicity the Hunzukuts abide by the fundamentals of Islam as they understand them. They may not be strong on ostentatious prayer and fasting, they rack their brains over no theological subtleties, but a Believer is a man and a brother, be he a Kashmiri, be he twenty times a sweeper. Here was a man of substance, a Levy, a grandfather, a much respected citizen in his small community, climbing a mile uphill to carry with his own hands a share of the evening's feast to his absentee guest. That the man was absent was no doubt a tactful concession to any caste-prejudice with which India might have infected me.

The boys lighten the monotony of the indoor weeks of the Great Cold by occasionally dashing out for a hasty game of foot polo or tipcat with their friends or keeping themselves warm with *mindak* matches. Such young men as are real dance

326 tion of these unusual people stirred up an interest within
533 me, and I wanted to know more about them. I found
563 very little data could be obtained from any of the books I had been able to read on the subject.

[173] But after much discourse and questioning, I learned what I had begun to suspect . . . that the Bericho were actually gypsies who had come to India more than 2,000 years ago. From India, as good gypsies would do, they fanned out to spread themselves in small groups over the entire country . . . some ultimately settling in Baltistan, from whence a colony were sent off to Hunza.

Their place of abode is actually a village known as Berishal. It is a known fact that the people of Hunza depend entirely upon the Bericho for their iron-mongering and their tool-smithing and their music-making.

I was very happy to have unearthed this information so I can pass it along to my readers.

• [871] [167] These Berichos used to send their children out of Hunza to be educated and the Mir told me that he had to put a stop to this practice . . . not because he objected to the children of the Bericho being educated, but because the children did not return or remain with the trade of their parents. As the Mir's country needed artisans of this type, he had to put a stop to their sending their children elsewhere for education.

[414] The Mir went on to tell me how important these Berichos were to the community. They fashioned farm implements as well as hardware like hinges, latches, razors and many other essential farm and household necessities that are fashioned from metal. Besides making the implements of peace, the blacksmith could also fashion a shotgun barrel.

[651] He further mentioned that each household in the community pays a small tithe as a contribution to-

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of the Aga Khan and his wife in various poses and stages of his life. I had given some study to these photographs and many of them were inscribed in the hand of the Aga Khan with endearing terms to his friend, Jamal.

Our quarters were in the guest house—actually adjoining the palace but on a higher level. This building had been erected by the Mir's grandfather back in 1925. It was a well-built, handsome structure, firmly ensconced on a high rocky ledge of granite.

You walked down the Mir's long staircase from the sun room, then you walked up half a dozen or more stone steps, forward a few feet and then you climbed up a circular, enclosed wooden staircase to the guest quarters. These consisted of a large, comfortable sitting room with many easy chairs and a fine writing desk, a large bedroom with two comfortable beds and further on was the bathroom. Then to the right of the lovely sitting room was a balcony—spacious and inviting. From it you could view Rakaposhi and all its splendor and gorgeous loveliness.

The furniture all round was similar to that which you would find in the average better-class American homes. Photographs adorned the walls, among which were the photos of the old Aga Khan and his French wife.

When I mentioned the Aga Khan to the Mir, he waxed eloquent and his face beamed and he said, "Not only was I fond of him—not only did I love him—but we were close intimate friends. He was the most generous of men and especially to the people of Hunza. I revere his memory! He was a wonderful person. We really miss him since his passing. His ancestors came from Persia to India in 1834. In 1934, one hundred years later, to celebrate the jubilee of the founding of

his ancestors' dynasty in India, he donated what is now the Hunzan school system. The fact that the children of Hunza are given a good education, without any cost to them, is due entirely to the kindness and benevolence of that great man. He started and maintained the system and I trust that his son will continue in his father's footsteps."

That the school system of Hunza is working, I can attest.

From what I have been able to gather and learn, Hunza was one of the states of India that contributed to the coffers of the Aga Khan. There is some story, true or mythical, that each year all of his religious followers throughout the world gave him a gift of gold or platinum to the extent of his weight. Now I do know that some gold was mined in Hunza and probably that, too, was sent to the Aga Khan or added to the sum or weight sent from all of the countries and the millions of his followers to be his gift but, as far as I know, at the present time there is not much gold being mined in Hunza and nowhere did I see any sign of anything that could be used as a means of export to bring money into Hunza.

In the meantime I was enjoying my breakfast and between munching mouthfuls of food, I was asking the Mir some rather important questions.

"I read somewhere some time ago, that the revenues you obtain from the fines you levy upon people in Hunza who commit misdemeanors or break rules or laws are added to the coffers of your own estate."

The Mir thought this was a great joke and laughed heartily.

"To begin with," he said, "laws are seldom broken by my people. They are good people and they live peaceably and do not commit serious offenses. During

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refusal and what other intrigues were involved, and when I questioned him about this and he explained, I realized that he had acted wisely—and so will you.

"If I allowed those boys to go to America to be educated and then come back to Hunza in a few years, both the Chinese and Russians could say that I sent them to America to be brainwashed, filled with propaganda or trained in subversive capitalistic activities.

"Well, I'm not giving Russia or China any excuses. We are a peace-loving people, we get along with the Chinese and the Russians, we mind our own business and we intend to stay free of entanglements and embroilments, if humanly possible.

"They said that I had refused to let the boys go because I was afraid that when they came back they would teach the people the American way, and that would undermine my rule and to a degree that is true, because I think my people are the happiest and healthiest in the world, and that is more than any other nation can claim. So I would like to keep them that way, if possible.

"But I'm not afraid of my people becoming educated because we do everything within our limited powers to further their education now and have done so for some years."

This statement I found to be absolutely true. The Hunzans by and large are the best learned people of that or any other area in India or Pakistan. Please don't misunderstand. I don't mean that there are no better educated individuals in these two countries because that is not so. I mean that there are few places in Pakistan or India where all of the male citizens are afforded the opportunity of getting an education without cost. That is true in Hunza.

These schools that I saw seemed to be comparable

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to the average little red school house in the West. The one in Baltit was quite a bit better and as good as any of our schools of 25 years ago . . . which I would say was mighty fine going for a far off place like Hunza.

Then I asked the Mir what had happened to John Clark's woodworking school and he told me, with calm deliberation, that he knew and felt that Mr. Clark was an earnest, honest man with the best of intentions. . . . "But, how could he," went on the Mir, "hope to improve the economy of our little country by means of a woodworking school and the training of our men in woodcraft when we do not have the required wood? We can't cut down our apricot trees, which are our very life, in order to get wood to use in making things that we could export to the United States!"

Then I recalled from Mr. Clark's book that he did have great difficulty in locating suitable lumber for his school.

From what I have read and learned on the scene about Clark's work, I know he was a man of high caliber and integrity and did a mighty good job with the boys, but for some strange reason there is an unusual silence about his work and his efforts. I could neither understand nor explain it. I'm still trying to get the true impression of the people concerning this matter.

At this point I want to emphasize that I am not seeking to pick a battle with anyone, but from my travels back and forth and around the Hunzan territory, it is fantastic to believe that there could ever be sufficient timber to make it worthwhile to run a woodworking school, especially to make woodcraft for export purposes.

Stonecraft, yes—for stones, even including some of the more precious and rare types, could without doubt be found in Hunza or at least in the mountains close

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Hunzan fruits taste better than those of other parts of the world. Most travelers who reach Hunza invariably state that the apricots and other fruits found there are much better flavored than those found in other parts of the world. I did not find this to be true. 245

Because they do not grow fruits for export or shipping, they can be tree-ripened. Therefore they have a better flavor than fruit that has to be picked in a green or unripened state. It is this fact that makes many people believe that Hunzan fruits taste better than the fruit they are accustomed to eating.

I happen to live in a part of the world where fruit is grown extensively and I must state categorically that Hunzan fruit does not taste any better than that grown on the farms adjacent to my home. Here, also, it must be admitted that most of the fruit I eat, especially during the fruit season, is also tree-ripened.

The people of Hunza are ignorant and uneducated. From my association with the people of Hunza, I must state boldly that they are neither ignorant nor uneducated. 871

There are schools of the same type as our grade schools in every large center in Hunza. It is admitted that only the male children are taught in these schools and there is no formal education offered to girls. This school system is entirely free and has been in existence for more than 25 years. It is emphasized that the native language of the people of Hunza is Burushaski and it is an unwritten language. However, they teach Urdu, Persian and other essential subjects. The intelligence and the abilities of the natives of Hunza rank with those found throughout the world.

The people are fierce and dangerous. There have been only 3 cases of murder recorded in Hunza in the 682